

SAINFOIN (*Onobrychis viciifolia*)

A Non-Bloat Forage Alternative to Alfalfa



Sainfoin is quickly gaining popularity in the U.S. and Canada as a non-bloat forage alternative to alfalfa. Extremely palatable and highly nutritious to all types of livestock and wildlife, with digestibility equal to alfalfa. Grow for high-protein hay, pasture or silage, in either pure stands or as a component of grass mixtures. Also use for habitat enhancement or in wildlife food plots. Excellent pollinator species and a superior honey plant to alfalfa.

Description

Introduced, perennial, nitrogen-fixing legume with stout, erect to nearly-erect, hollow, succulent stems, up to 4 ft. in height. Pink-striped flowers occur in conelike clusters on the end of long, upright stalks. Large, deep branching taproot; also fine lateral roots. Compound, multi-foliolate leaves. Large seeds in single-seeded pods. It is both drought-tolerant and winter-hardy. Neither invasive or weedy. Matures faster than alfalfa, providing early spring forage.

Planting & Growing

Tolerant of low phosphorus soils. Best in soils with pH ≥ 7 . Plant $\frac{1}{4}$ " – $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep. About 22,000 seeds per lb (in the pod). Apply at 35 – 45 lbs/acre (pure stand, irrigated) or at $\geq 50\%$ (by weight) in grass pasture mixes. Cut and bale at 10% bloom, similar to alfalfa. Species specific rhizobia inoculant available upon request.

Irrigated Varieties

Remont

Extremely cold-hardy variety with early spring growth (susceptible to frost damage) and rapid regrowth after haying or grazing. High yield potential in areas with a long growing season.
(Released 1971)

Delaney

Multiple-cut variety with excellent regrowth, best suited for use under high rainfall or irrigation. Higher forage yields under irrigation than other sainfoins, birdsfoot trefoils, cicer milkvetchs and Ladak 65 alfalfa. Tolerant of the northern root-knot nematode. Resistant to alfalfa stem nematode.
(Released 2007)

Dryland Varieties

Eski

Developed for use in non-irrigated pastures or land with limited water. Later to mature than Remont. Used frequently in reclamation seed mixes in western rangelands.
(Released 1964)

Shoshone

Cold-hardy variety developed for high tolerance to the northern root-knot nematode. Resistant to alfalfa stem nematode. Typically single-cut, but better regrower than Remont and Eski. Higher yield than Remont in both dryland and irrigated settings.
(Released 2006)

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